"PROTO-PARIS" AND "PROTO-ACHILLES" IN INDO-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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To the memory of Vladimir Toporov (1928-2005)

In Indo-European mythology a prominent place is taken by the myth of the thunder god and his adversary the serpent (*osnovnoj mif* "basic myth" according to V.V. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov). In Vedic mythology, the thunder god Indra is the king of the devas (gods) while his arch-adversary the serpent Vṛtra is the leader of the Asuras, another class of deities opposed to the devas. The Asuras are composed of two family groups: the Dānavas, the children of Dānu (a female demon), and the Daityas, the children of Dānu's sister Diti. Vṛtra is a Dānava (< *dānawo-).

In the *Iliad*, the opposing groups are the Trojans and the Greeks (Achaeans). There are striking parallels between the Indian and Greek traditions. The Greeks are frequently called Δαναοί 'Danaans' (< *danawo-). This ethnonym is apparently comparable with the Dānavas. Indra fights against the Dānavas, ravishes and weds the most voluptuous Śacī (a daughter of a Dānava), and kills the leader of the Dānavas Vṛtra, while Paris fights against the Greek Danaans, ravishes and weds the most beautiful woman, the Greek Helen, and kills the greatest Greek hero, Achilles (Ἀχιλλεύ□). Indra is a thunder god, while the name of Paris is reminiscent of a truncated anagram of the Indo-European thunder god *Per(kʷ)u-no- (cf. Ind. Parjanya, Russ. Перuнъ, Lith. Perkunas).

Indra performs many manly deeds and is called 'manly' and 'most manly' (e.g., *nare naryāya nṛtamāya nṛnām* 'manly man, manliest of men,' *RV* IV.25.4; *nṛtama* occurs elsewhere: I.29.1; III.30.22; IV.22.2; VI.18.7; VII.6.4; VIII.24.1; X.29.1, etc). These words are derived from Indo-European *h₂ner- 'virile strength; man;' moreover, Indra's name, too, according to an opinion, is derived from *h₂ner-, gen. *h₂nro-. In one of the hymns of the Rigveda (I.174.1), he is invoked to protect the men (*rakṣā nṝn*). Paris' second name is *Alexandros* (Ἀλέξανδρος) 'Protector of men' (Apoll. III.12.5), which etymologically coincides with *rakṣā nṝn* (in Indo-European context: *h₂lek- & *h₂ner-). Vṛtra is called *ahi* 'serpent, snake.' This word is derived from one of the variants of the Indo-European stem for 'snake' (*h₁egʷhi-, h₂engʷhi-, etc). Remarkably, Toporov, considering the genealogy and certain "serpentine" characteristics of Achilles, concludes that his name represents a dialectal or non-Greek reflex of the same stem. In this context Achilles' epithet ῥηξῆνωρ 'destroyer of men' is notable (*Il.*VII.228; XIII.324, etc). This makes possible the reconstruction of the formula *h₂lek- & *h₂ner- : *h₁egʷhi-l

*h₂engʷhi-.

Indra	*h₂lek- & h₂ner-	Adversary of Dānavas	Abducts Śacī	Kills 'serpent' Vṛtra
Paris-Alexandros	*h₂lek- & h₂ner-	Adversary of Danaans	Abducts Helen	Kills 'serpent' Achilles

Thus, the relationship of Paris-Alexandros : Achilles would correspond to that of Indra : Vṛtra. In Indo-European context, the *Iliad* represents an inversed myth, where the hero-eponym of the goodies, Danaans/Achaeans, is derived from the serpent (note the consonance of the ethnonym of the Achaeans with Achilles), while the baddie, his murderer, is associated with the thunder god.

Dānu represents Indo-European *deh₂nu- (*dānu-) 'river,' a suffixed form of *deh₂- 'to flow,' and Dānava (< *dānawo-) is a derivative of dānu-. In several Indo-European myths the counterparts of the mythic Dānus (Dānavas) seem to be conflated with a real tribe who bore a similar ethnonym (cf. Danunians: inhabitants of Adana in the first millennium BC; Danites: one of the twelve tribes of Israel). The *h₂ner-gods/heroes fight against them and abduct their women. The serpent, leader of the mythic Danus, is replaced by the West Semitic god Baal. Judging from the myths, some Indo-Europeans neighbored the West Semites and even could have been absorbed them. Danaos, the eponym of the Danaan Greeks was the son of Bēlos (Baal). It might be inferred there was a Semitic ethnic element absorbed in the Greeks who they owed the tradition of the Danaans.

In one of the variants of the Anatolian weather god myth, the god defeats the serpent Illuyanka with the help of his daughter Inara. The Hittite text is represented as a speech of a priest of the weather god of the city of Nerik at the Purulli festival. Nerik was originally one of the most important Hattian (pre-Hittite, non-Indo-European) sacral centers. The weather (thunder) god of Nerik, Taru, was the head of the early local Hattian pantheon whose homophony with Tarhun(t)-, the Anatolian (originally Luvian) Indo-European thunder god, seems not to be coincidental. However, the Purulli ritual text is considered in the context of the Indo-European thunder god myth. Under the figure of the Taru/Tarhunt- the early Indo-European thunder god is probably hidden, while the second part of Illuyanka is derived from *h₂engʷh- 'snake'. It would seem that the Purulli ritual myth was influenced by a non-Anatolian Indo-European tradition as well. In a special study, Toporov claimed that Purulli would represent a Thracian borrowing (*puhr- 'fire'). Some related (Proto-Thracian?) elements could be sought in Taru's milieu as well.

The two names of the city of Troy, Troia and Ilios/Ilion, are considered to be

derived from the two ancient place names attested to in Hittite sources: Taruisa and Wilusa. The historic counterpart of Paris-Alexandros Alaksandus was a king of Wilusa who sealed a treaty with the Hittite king Muwattalli II. According to one opinion, the Thracians and the Luvians were the major ethnic groups in Troy. Nevertheless, in the presumable predecessor of the *Iliad*, the local thunder god would eponymize Troy, thus "Proto-Paris" and "Proto-Achilles" would represent the near relations of Taru/Tarhunt and Illuyanka, respectively.

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